MORE DAMAGE TO CHURCHES BY LIGHTNING.—The casualties seem to be more than usually numerous this summer. During one of the recent thunder-storms the tower and spire of Woolpit church, in Suffolk, were almost totally destroyed. The spire was thrown down, together with more than two-thirds of the tower. The bells were hurled in different directions, and the clock smashed. The fragile belfry window, painted by Mrs. Marriot, strange to say, escaped entire in the midst of the wreck. This is not the first time that the spire of Woolpit church has fallen. On 26th November, 1703, a pinnacle of about 66 feet in height was blown off the steeple by a strong south-west wind, which did considerable damage to the north part of the church. On the present occasion several of the inhabitants of Woolpit saw the flash of the lightning, which appeared like a stream of fire as thick as the human arm, and they witnessed the stroke which made the spire reel to and fro before it fell. From the evidence of the eye witnesses the incumbent, the Rev. L. F. Page, is of opinion that the lightning ran along the iron bands which at different times had been inserted in the work to bind the weak parts together, and wrenched them out, and with such violence as to bring the whole down. Nothing is said of a lightning conductor, and doubtless the spire was unprotected by one. The rev. incumbent, even while remarking that the parishioners "are thankful that God, who makes a decree for the rain, and *a way for the lightning* of the thunder, made that decree and that way just in the direction where it did least harm," does not appear to have had suggested to his mind the propriety or possibility of human intervention in the making of "a way for the lightning," in the direction where it *would* do least harm. He states that five architects some time ago inspected the tower, and what they recommended he did for its security, for it had been "injured by the hand of time, and still more by the hand of man—by digging graves quite close to the foundations, and by cutting away one corner of a buttress—in former generations." Can it be possible that not one out of five architects recommended the application of a lightning conductor amongst other means of security to a cracked and fragile tower, so doubly endangered by iron bands buried in the stones of which it was constructed?——On Friday week the spire of Leighton Buzzard Church was also struck, and a large portion of it fell through the roof of the church, destroying the pews, and rendering this recently repaired edifice dangerous to enter, or even to approach. Not a word here either of a lightning conductor. Had there been one, its failure would have been duly chronicled, if indeed it happened not to be blamed for the occurrence of the catastrophe itself.

RE-OPENING OF "THE HOLY-WELL," IN HOLYWELL-STREET, STRAND. — For some time past a considerable degree of interest has been excited from the fact that the "Holy-Well" is likely soon to give up its pure (?) spring to the locality, where, in the time of green fields and gardens, at the period of two or three centuries past, the historian Stowe refers to it "as being much decayed and spoiled with rubbish, purposely laid there for the heightening of the ground for garden plots." That the spring still exists in some part of Holywell-street is proved by the fact that the Roman Baths, in Strand-lane, are supplied from it. Under a portion of the Old Dog Tavern, in Holywell-street, it has been proverbial that this well existed, but that it had long since been filled with rubbish. The ancient tavern has now passed into the hands of the proprietor of Betty's Chop-House, in the Strand, and the "Holy-Well," after sleeping for two centuries, or having its spring diverted to serve other points, is soon likely to furnish the water from the old spring. The well, it was found, has the circumference made by old tiles and bricks, and was 80 or 90 feet deep, all the dirt and rubbish having been cleared out. Some broken glasses of the olden time have been brought up, and the men have got to the foundation of the well, but up to this time without obtaining water, and they are now boring down for the spring of the far-famed "Holy-Well." It will be curious, indeed, if it should be brought up to the spot where, in 1660, "the youths and scholars of the City walked to it to take the air."—*Morning paper.*

STATISTICS OF STRIKES IN BRITAIN.—In 1836, says a provincial cotemporary, the operatives of Preston, to the number of 6,000, struck work for thirteen weeks, and the loss, in a mere monetary point of view, to the town and trade of Preston, was calculated at no less a sum than 107,196*l.* whilst from 20,000 to 30,000 individuals were reduced at once to starvation. In the same year, the cotton-spinners of Glasgow struck for a period of seventeen weeks: the total loss to Glasgow amounted to 194,550*l.* In 1834, the result of the combination of colliers in Lanarkshire, and the two adjoining counties, was equivalent to a tax on the inhabitants of 489,000*l.* for a period of eighteen months, besides a loss to the colliers themselves, their employers, and others, during a strike of six months, of 189,000*l.* In this strike it is also calculated that between 40,000 and 50,000 human beings were rendered destitute. Trade strikes have ever proved injurious to the workmen no less than to their employers, and to the country in which they have occurred. It is to the interest of every labouring man to avoid combinations which lead to strikes.

ABERDARE MARKETS COMPETITION.—Being aware of your just appreciation of instances of liberality, and also of the desire of extending the knowledge of such instances to the profession generally, through the medium of your valuable journal, I cannot refrain from communicating to you the result of the Aberdare market competition. Very few designs were sent in (no wonder), and of those few we will say nothing. The spirited committee, however, decided one to be the best, and awarded the 40*l.* premium conditionally on its being contracted for, and carried out within, the estimate of 4,000*l.* The plans were retained for several days, and the fortunate competitor, a Mr. *Lewis*, of this neighbourhood, was at last sent for, and appeared before the committee, who praised the design, &c. and suggested some alterations, and then offered him, not 40*l.* but 5*l.* for the plans. I have heard that during the time the plans were retained, a local competitor had them in his possession. So much for competitions. — A NON-COMPETITOR.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT PARTNERSHIPS AND SOCIETIES.—An Act was passed end of last session (15 & 16 Vict. c. 31), "to Regulise the formation of industrial and provident societies." It is intended by this Act that societies of working men may be established for attaining the objects of the Friendly Societies Acts by means of joint trade, except banking. The rules of such societies are to be framed in accordance with the Act. The funds are not to be invested with the National Debt Commissioners, and societies established before the passing of the Act shall come under its provisions so soon as they shall conform to the provisions thereof. As to the liability of members, it is provided that "nothing in this or the said recited Act (Friendly Societies Act) shall be construed to restrict in anywise the liability of the members of such society established under or by virtue of this Act, or claiming the benefit thereof, to the lawful debts and engagements of such society; provided always, that no person shall be liable for the debts or engagements of any such society after the expiration of two years from his ceasing to be a member of the same." The Act is to be cited as the "Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1852."

EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS.—It appears from a paper recently read in the Academy of Archæology at Rome, that Father Secchi alleges he has found a new interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which enables him to declare that most of them are not mere tombstone inscriptions, as is generally assumed, but poems. He has given several of his readings, which are said to display great ingenuity; and he professes to be able to decipher the inscriptions on the obelisk of Luxor, at Paris.

WHITCHURCH, NEAR STANMORE.—In a late number of THE BUILDER, I observed a request from one of your correspondents for a history of the little church of Whitchurch, or Stanmore Parva, near Stanmore, Middlesex. Having myself visited it, although not very lately, I can only remember that the best, and I may likewise add, the only account of it that I have ever met with, is to be found in the 5th volume of "Brayley's and Brewer's History of London and Middlesex," p. 643, &c. which likewise gives a good description of the once famous and magnificent seat of James Brydges, afterwards Duke of Chandos, taken down and removed in the year 1747. The parish church, a small structure, was rebuilt principally of brick, about the year 1715, with the exception of the tower, and beneath is a capacious and well-lighted vault, in which the duke himself and many of the family are interred, splendid marble monuments to their memory being contained in a chamber above the vault. In the cemetery adjoining, I observed a decayed wooden rail to the memory of William Powell,* the humorous blacksmith of Handel, who, it is said, composed many of his sacred airs and services for this chapel, or, as it now is, church.—C. H.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.—On Tuesday evening a writ of supersedeas was received from the Lord Chancellor, at the Chief Sewers' Office, Greek-street, Soho, dissolving the old Commission of Sewers, and reconstructing it entirely. The old commission must necessarily have expired in a very short period under the 12 & 13 Vict. c. 93, by which its duration was limited to one year from August 1851, and therefore the Chancellor's writ was merely a formal act. The following fourteen gentlemen are appointed, only five of them having belonged to the former commission:—Mr. R. Jebb, chairman; Sir John Burgoyne, Major R. K. Dawson, Mr. Thomas Hawes, Capt. J. Vetch, Sir Charles Fellows, Mr. George Baker, Mr. T. F. Gibson, Mr. Lewis D. B. Gordon, Mr. J. Hawkshaw, Mr. W. Hosking (official referee under the Metropolitan Buildings Act), Mr. H. A. Hunt, Mr. Lawrence Redhead, and Mr. G. Spencer Smith. By an Act passed the 30th of June, 1852, the old Metropolitan Sewers Act is continued until the 7th of August, 1853, with important alterations with respect to the rating powers of the commission, and the burden of the sewers' rates upon land devoted to agricultural purposes.

A NEW KIND OF PAPER.—It appears that a gentleman named Senefelder, nephew of the inventor of lithographic printing, has proposed to the French government an invention of his, termed *papier de sureté*. With this paper, it is said, not only the slightest attempt at forgery of public or private documents would be rendered impossible, but also that of a second time using stamped paper by means of chemical preparations. In the departments of the Seine the treasury suffers a yearly loss of 500,000f. by the art employed to render stamped paper again fit for use. Independently of other advantages, it is supposed that by the introduction of such prepared paper, the French state would gain from 10,000,000f. to 12,000,000f.

PROPOSED NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF METALWORK AT SHEFFIELD.—Preparations, according to the local papers, are in progress towards the formation of an exhibition of metalwork next year at Sheffield. The authorities connected with the local school of Ornamental Art are taking an active interest in the project, and the superintendents of the central department of practical art are said to approve of the idea.

CLEANSING-MACHINERY.—An apparatus for beating, brushing, scouring, and drying carpets has been patented by Mr. Horn, of Belgrave-street, Pimlico. The carpet is fixed on rollers, and made to pass between spring whips and revolving brushes. In purifying feathers, wool, &c. dust is first removed: they are then subjected to steam, and dried by heat.

* He was parish clerk of this church twenty-four years, and in the time of Handel: he died on the 27th February, 1760, aged about 78 years.

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